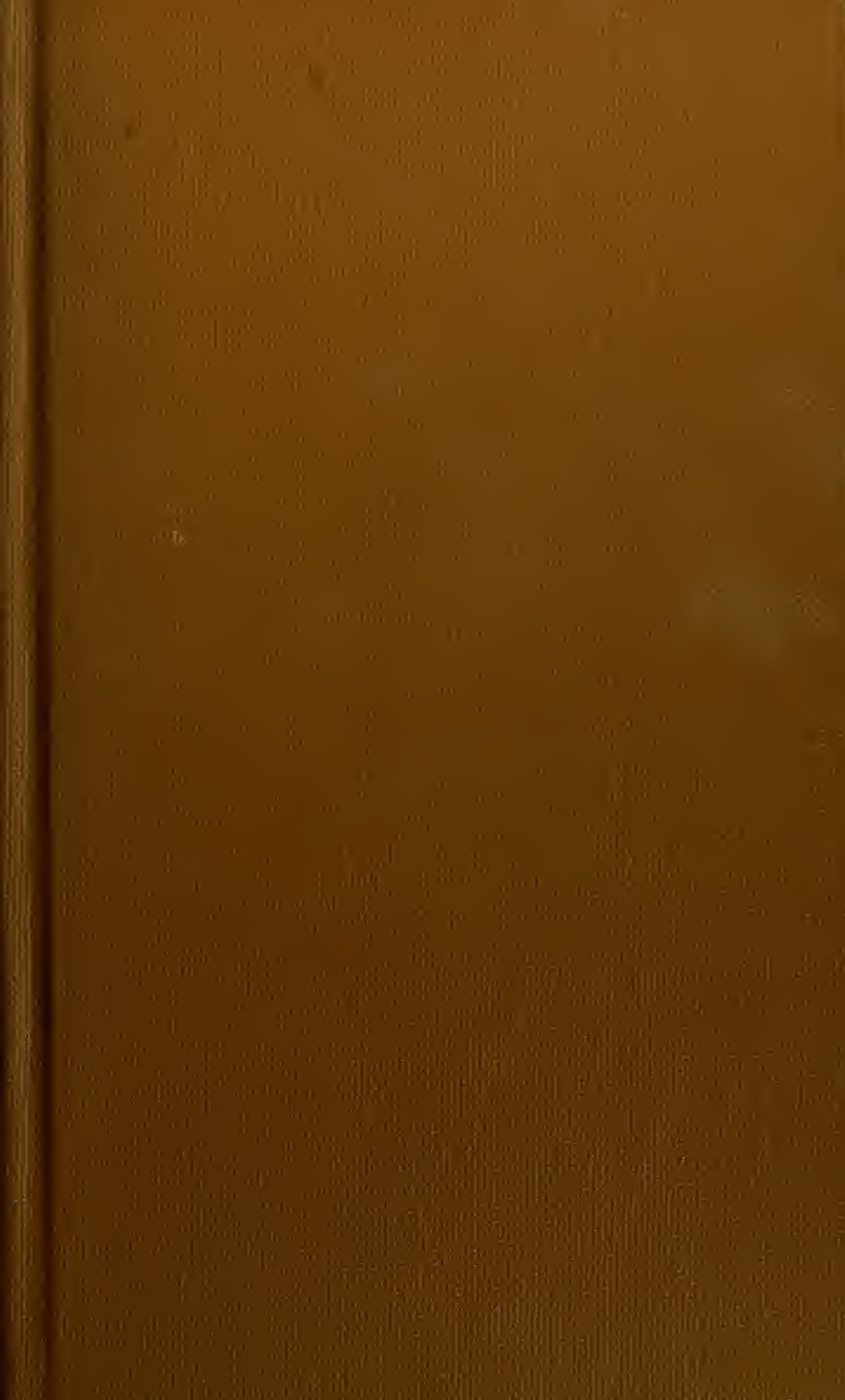




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BY THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES,

JANUARY 29, 1868.

Read and 5,000 copies ordered to be printed.

By order,

MILTON Y. KIDD,

Chief Clerk.

FIRST REPORT

OF THE

SUPERINTENDENT OF LABOR AND AGRICULTURE

TO THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF

MARYLAND.

January Session, 1868.

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REPORT.

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*To the Honorable, the General Assembly of Maryland :*

The undersigned, the Superintendent of Labor and Agriculture, being required by the Constitution to communicate with the Legislature upon the subjects committed to his charge, begs to be permitted now, at the beginning of his term of service, to solicit your attention to the office to which he has recently been elected. In approaching its duties, I have been unable to resist the conviction that without the aid of your Honorable Bodies, this new department cannot be made as useful to our people, and as efficient in developing the resources of the State, as its framers designed it to be, and hence I am induced to invoke your early co-operation. Indeed it will be obvious, from an examination of the 10th Article of the Constitution, which defines the outline of my duties, so extensive and promising of good results, that further legislation was expected and will be required for their full and satisfactory performance.

By that article I am required—

1st. To execute such plans as are or may be prescribed by law to increase the productive labor of the State by immigration.

2d. To secure the faithful execution of our Inspection laws.

3rd. To supervise certain public buildings, and all others which may be committed to my charge by the Legislature.

And, lastly, to inquire into such of the undeveloped resources of the State, more especially those within the Chesapeake Bay, as may be made to contribute to its revenues.

These are all duties of great public importance and responsibility; but it must be apparent to your Honorable Bodies that it will be impossible for one officer to execute all of them. It was the design of the Convention, and I feel confident it must be the desire of the General Assembly, to make this a useful department of the public service, and to that end it is essential that its organization should be completed by such legislation as will supply the Superintendent with intelligent assistants, clerical aid and such means as will be necessary for the faithful discharge of all his duties. A brief consideration of the various sections of the 10th Article of the Constitution, will suggest the action required.

By the 3rd section, I am required “to perform such of the duties now devolved by law upon the *Commissioner of Immigration* and the *Immigration Agent*, as will promote the objects for which those officers were appointed, and also such

other duties as may be assigned to me by the General Assembly."

Your Honorable Bodies, after reviewing the acts under which those offices were organized, and the reports of the officers themselves, will determine how far it is desirable for me to pursue the paths of labor trodden by them; but I cannot refrain from expressing the hope that in this business of inviting and directing immigration to our State, you will not confine the operation of my department to the narrow limits enjoined upon those agents, but will assign to me the duty and means of extending my labors into those trans-Atlantic nations where labor is most abundant and cheap, and where proper efforts are more likely to result in success.

The experience of all our former slaveholding communities since the war, teaches that our African laborers have ceased to be reliable or profitable, and that as tenants or permanent settlers upon our lands, are not to be desired. The almost universal voice of the Southern people and press is in favor of extending encouragement and aid to European immigration, as the only means, not only of promoting their material interests, but of preserving civilization itself in many vast and once prosperous districts. But it is not likely that any considerable white population can be attracted to States held under a military despotism. Happily, Maryland is free to act. Every condition, both at home and abroad, invites her to act *now*, and considering the fact that the State has decided not to compensate her citizens for their slaves, it may, not unreasonably, be asked to advance to the support of such measures as are designed to increase the production and value of their land, and the great aggregate of our taxable property.

A glance at the last census, or at the recent vote of the State, will show that many of our counties are greatly deficient in the population essential to the full measure of their prosperity. Without additions to their white population, the value of land in those sections which have suffered most from emancipation, must long remain stationary. I shall be gratified, if by the aid and authority of your Honorable Bodies, the new department of Labor and Agriculture shall be made serviceable in supplying the great want of so many of our landholders. I concur in opinion with the gentleman, upon whose motion in the Constitutional Convention this department was established, that it is "only to such a State Agency as this, supported by the resources of the Commonwealth, and extending its influence among the dense population of Europe, that we can rely with any confidence for an early and sufficient supply of labor to take the place of that scattered by the usurped authority of the Convention of 1864, and which subsequent events have so rapidly demoralized." And, therefore, I respectfully submit that, in

order to make my department efficient in this branch of its service, the Superintendent be authorized to make our advantages and resources known abroad, by means of cheap maps or other publications, by advertising at well selected points, and by the employment of at least two foreign agents, viz., at the termini of the Baltimore steamship lines, Liverpool and Bremen. Of course the details of, and the appropriations required for conducting this business, would be carefully arranged and considered by a committee of your Honorable Bodies. If thus organized and liberally sustained, I believe that this department will be able to render good service to our agriculturists and others in want of laborers. Considering the great demand for them, both for the house and field, in all parts of the State, as well as for that class of immigrants who would become tenants and permanent settlers, it would be difficult to suggest any scheme better calculated to promote the welfare of our people, than that which would place them in communication through this office, with the cheap labor market of Europe.

I beg leave to recall the fact that our late Commissioner of Immigration, with the very inadequate fund at his disposal, last year induced upwards of two thousand immigrants to remain in our State, and we are informed that some of them represented a capital of from \$200 to \$1,300. This result was obtained at a cost of not over two or three dollars per man. Could we not afford to pay double that price, if necessary, to secure an immigration of from ten to twenty thousand per annum to Maryland? This outlay would not have to be long continued, for nothing can be more certain than that, after the channel is well open, this desirable stream of white labor will pour into the State freely and without cost. In this connection I may state that the reports of the New York Commissioners of Immigration show that seventy-four per cent. of the immigrants are in the prime of life, and that, besides their capacity for labor and habits of industry, they bring with them in cash means an average of \$125 for each man, woman and child. An immigration of ten thousand per annum would therefore bring into the State a million and a quarter of dollars in cash capital. And when we add to this the vast amount which their labor would contribute to the general wealth and taxable property, we perceive how manifestly it is to our interest to seek and encourage it.

Under the 4th section of the 10th Article of the Constitution, I am required to take charge of the tobacco warehouses and other buildings used by the State for inspection and storage purposes. It seems also to have been contemplated that the supervision of all the public buildings now belonging to, or which may hereafter be erected by the State, would be entrusted by the Legislature to this department, and that all contracts for labor or materials required in their construc-

tion or repairs should be made by this Superintendent. Should your Honorable Bodies confide to me the custody of all the public buildings, it would seem proper that all the keepers, watchmen or other employees of the State, having charge of such property, should receive their appointments from this department, and be made responsible to it for the faithful discharge of such rules as the Superintendent might find it necessary to prescribe.

By the 4th section it is also made my duty to supervise all the inspectors of agricultural products and fertilizers. As yet I have but little information upon this subject; but the faithful administration of our inspection laws is a matter which concerns deeply, not only our agriculturists, but all classes, and the best interests of the State.

Before long, I hope to become sufficiently familiar with this branch of my duties, as to be enabled to report whether the many alleged abuses really exist, and what changes or reforms may be required in our system of inspections. Considering the immense aggregate of capital annually invested by our farmers in artificial fertilizers, and in many cases without the least increase of crops, it is desirable that prompt and effectual protection should be afforded them by the State, through this Department. Upon this subject I may perhaps be excused for asking your attention to a suggestion made by the committee who reported this 10th Article for the consideration of the Convention :

“There is no question but that if a high standard of inspection was established for such articles as are compounded of really fertilizing materials, an immense trade for them would be attracted to Baltimore, from this and from all the Southern States; and we can see no better mode of securing that standard of excellence in artificial fertilizers than by requiring the manufacturers of them to obtain a license from the Department of Labor and Agriculture, and pay therefor such sums as would enable it to guard us from fraud, by having the materials carefully inspected by a chemist, and, if necessary, by having the whole process of manufacture or manipulation supervised by sworn agents. These manufacturers could well afford to pay for such inspection, because, while it secured our farmers from imposition, it would increase their trade immensely, and banish from the commerce of the State all rival compounds not so inspected.”

Should your Honorable Bodies desire to act upon this subject, I should be pleased to invite a conference with the gentlemen engaged in this trade; and as their *true* interest corresponds with that of the agriculturists, which this Department is designed to protect, I doubt not but that a plan of supervision, satisfactory to all, may be devised.

I now pass to the last, but not the least of the duties assigned by the Constitution to this Department. The fifth

section of the Article presents a wide field for investigation and labor, and embraces all the undeveloped resources of wealth of the State, and especially those lying within the Chesapeake Bay. It was evidently designed that this Department should be made the means of utilizing the great resources of the State, and it is to be hoped that the expectations of our people in this may not be disappointed. It appears from the last annual report of the State Comptroller, that the total revenue derived last year from our vast and rich domain, covered by the waters of the Bay, was but \$28,698. That was the whole amount received for the licenses to take oysters. In the late annual report of the Board of Trade of Baltimore, it is stated that the oyster trade of that city now amounts to about eight millions of bushels per annum. It is supposed by many well informed persons that nearly as many millions more are carried by vessels to other points. We may perhaps safely compute the oyster product of our waters to be twelve millions of bushels, and doubtless, with proper regulations and supervision, it may be greatly increased in the future.

The State of Virginia levies a tax of three cents per bushel upon all its oysters; and it has put afloat three small steam vessels to protect the trade and guard the revenue. The necessity for affording such supervision and protection to our own resources in the bay, is demonstrated by events which have transpired almost within sight of the Capitol, since the assembling of your Honorable Bodies. A number of vessels are now lying in the port of Annapolis, charged with the violation of our oyster laws; and it is said that very many infringe them and escape with impunity.

As I am required by the 5th Section of the 10th Article, to suggest such plans as may be calculated to render our public resources available, I would respectfully submit to your Honorable Bodies the propriety of enacting a law similar to that of Virginia, and of conferring upon this department the power and means to enforce its execution and collect the revenue. A tax of three cents, which would not affect injuriously the business or rights of any of our citizens, or cause any appreciable advance in the cost of this luxury to its consumers in so many States, if applied to our assumed oyster production of twelve millions of bushels, would yield a revenue of \$360,000 per annum. Should such a law be passed, and this department be properly equipped to carry it into execution, it is not improbable that before the lapse of four years, it might bring us a revenue of half a million of dollars.

A portion of the large fund realized from this source might very appropriately be devoted to the work of attracting immigration, and thus the products of the bay be made the means of enriching the counties upon its shores, to many of which an increased white population has become a great

necessity. In the prosecution of the duties of my office, I shall be required to inquire into our mineral wealth. To this subject I propose to give my earnest consideration, and hope to recommend such measures as will tend to develop our resources, and promote the prosperity of the State.

From this glance at the duties of my department, as defined in the 10th Article of the Constitution, the following acts of legislation would seem to be required :

1st. A bill to promote immigration, embracing a practicable and comprehensive plan of action, and providing the means and prescribing the forms for its execution.

2d. A bill transferring the custody of public buildings to this department, and confiding to it all the duties essential for their preservation and repairs.

3d. A bill providing for the inspection of artificial fertilizers, and which will afford to our agriculturists the guarantee of an effectual scientific supervision by this department.

4th. A law providing for the collection of a tax per bushel upon oysters.

And, 5th. A bill to complete the organization of this department.

In view of the magnitude and importance of its duties, it is, I think, essential that there should be at least one Assistant Superintendent. The amount of clerical aid required will depend upon the action of your Honorable Bodies concerning the various branches of public affairs committed to my charge. The passage of such a law in regard to fertilizers as that suggested would necessitate the employment of a skillful and industrious chemist, with some subordinate co-laborers in guarding that branch of the public service. The proposed oyster law would require, perhaps, that at least two vessels should be employed under capable and responsible officers.

I propose, with the consent of your Honorable Bodies, to establish my office in Baltimore ; and as a bill has already been introduced to purchase a building in that city for the use of the State, it may be well to provide in it ample room for the transaction of the business of this department.

In conclusion, I beg your Honorable Bodies to believe that this communication is prompted by an earnest desire that this department may realize in the large scope of its duties the expectations of the Convention, and of the people who have so generously assigned to me the task of their administration. Should your confidence and support be added to theirs, I trust that my future reports will disclose the fact that it has become a most useful department of the State.

Respectfully,

WM. S. McPHERSON,  
*Supt. Labor & Agriculture.*



